



Week 2 Assignment: Background – Real Life Research Action Examples

Overview

Last week students had an opportunity to examine the differences in action research and traditional research. Students began to answer questions like:

- Why do action research?
- How will action research benefit leaders and stakeholders in educational settings?
- Why is reflection an important skill for leaders?
- Why are blogs beneficial in sharing what we are learning about action research?

This week's lecture, interviews, readings and assignments focus on examples of action research in educational settings. These examples will help you begin to identify your topic for your action research project and provide you with a clear purpose describing why this action research project is important in your professional development.

Here are the Learning and Performance Outcomes for Week Two:

Learning Outcomes

- 1) Identify possible action research topics from the intern plan developed in EDLD 5311 and skills needed to successfully lead the research project.
- 2) Be familiar with areas frequently identified by school leaders needing further research (e.g., school and curriculum development, school culture/campus improvement, school performance in reducing achievement gaps, etc.).

Performance Outcomes:

- 1) Describe some examples of action research from reviewing interviews with current school leaders.
- 2) Review your internship plan and meet with the site supervisor to brainstorm potential needed and/or desired research topics.
- 3) Using *Leading with passion and knowledge: The principal as action researcher*, identify at least nine areas that are common targets or themes of school-based action research.

Rubric

Use the following Rubric to guide your work on the Week 2 Assignment.

Tasks	Accomplished The evidence suggests that this work is a "Habit of Mind." The educator is ready to mentor others in this area.	Proficient The evidence suggests that performance on this work matches that of a strong educator.	Needs Improvement The evidence does not yet make the case for the educator being proficient at this task.
Action Research – Lessons from Scholar Practitioners	Student selects two of the interviewed scholars and clearly answers questions thoroughly, and for each selected scholar, the student identifies at least one topic for action research; suggestions for conducting action research; and writes a meaningful reflection on lessons learned from the interviews. (3 Points)	Student selects two of the interviewed scholars and attempts to answer questions, but does not thoroughly address all three areas addressed in the activity. (2 Points)	Student only comments on one interviewed scholar and does not thoroughly respond to all areas addressed in the activity. (1 Point)
Common action research topics in educational settings	Student clearly identifies eight or nine of the text topics and provides an example of action research for each of those 8 or 9 areas, along with explaining the benefit(s) of conducting action research in each of the identified topics. Student basically receives a full point for each topic identified and providing thorough responses to each topic. (8 – 9 Points)	Student identifies six or seven of the text topics and provides an example of action research for each of those 6 or 7 areas, along with explaining the benefit(s) of conducting action research in each of the identified topics. Student basically receives a full point for each topic identified and providing responses to each topic. (6 – 7 Points)	Student identifies five or fewer of the text topics and provides an example of action research for each of those 8 or 9 areas, along with explaining the benefit(s) of conducting action research in each of the identified topics. Student basically receives a full point for each topic identified and providing thorough responses to each topic. (1 – 5 Points)
Selecting an Action Research Topic	Student follows directions and provides thorough responses to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify at least three topics for possible 	Student responds to only two of the following activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify at least three topics for possible action 	Student responds to one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify at least three topics for possible action research

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	<p>action research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the conference with the site supervisor(s) regarding topics of interest for action research Describe the topic or problem agreed upon for the action research project. <p>(3 Points)</p>	<p>research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the conference with the site supervisor(s) regarding topics of interest for action research Describe the topic or problem agreed upon for the action research project. <p>(2 Points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the conference with the site supervisor(s) regarding topics of interest for action research Describe the topic or problem agreed upon for the action research project. <p>(1 Point)</p>
Assignment Mechanics	<p>Responses are relevant to course content; no errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Students demonstrate proper APA style.</p> <p>(3 Points)</p>	<p>Responses are relevant to course content; few errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation.</p> <p>(2 Points)</p>	<p>Responses do not reflect knowledge of course content, lack clarity and depth, and/or include multiple errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation.</p> <p>(1 Point)</p>

Week Two Assignment, Part 1 – Action Research Lessons from Scholar Practitioners

Go to Week Two Lectures and watch the interviews with three school leaders who discuss action research projects and suggestions for conducting action research. The three school leaders completed their doctorates at Lamar University, and their dissertations are available in the Lamar library and in the resource section of this course. The three leaders are:

- Dr. Johnny Briseno, Principal, Rancho Isabella Elementary, Angleton ISD
- Dr. Timothy Chargois, Director of Research, Planning and Development in Beaumont ISD
- Dr. Kirk Lewis, Superintendent, Pasadena ISD

After watching and listening to these three scholar practitioners, select two of them and answer the following based on the comments from the two interviews you analyzed:

1. Identify the scholars you selected

For each scholar, answer the following:

2. Identify at least one area or topic for action research discussed by each scholar.
3. Describe at least one suggestion or purpose described by each scholar for conducting action research.
4. Reflect on what you learned from watching and listening to each of these scholars.

Remember if you wish to follow-up on the topics these scholars selected for their action research, please see their respective dissertations located in the Resource Section of this course, as well as available with other Educational Leadership dissertations at the Lamar University library site.

Also, in the Week One Lecture, we discussed an outstanding web resource on action research,

Electronic Textbook - A Blast from the Past: Your Literature Review

<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~mid/edr720/class/literature/blast/reading2-1-1.html>.

Dr. Mary Dereshiwsy, who served as a consultant and action research scholar, to this course, shared her web site, and this particular link provides you with insightful information regarding conducting a literature review, also discussed in the Dana text, Data Collection Strategy 9: Literature, pp. 93 – 94. This website provides you with guidance in researching what has been written or published on a particular research topic of interest. The professors strongly suggest that you examine this website, also referenced in the Resource Section of the Course.

Workspace

Complete your work on Part 1 of this assignment below. The box will expand as you type.

Johnny Brisco is principal of Rancho Isabella Elementary in Angleton ISD. He discussed that quantitative data is important but educators need to also consider qualitative data. When looking at quantitative data know about the student and their environment which would affect their results. He stated that numbers don't always tell the whole story. It is important to know the identity of the students whose scores you are viewing.

Also, in Johnny Brisco's interview he discussed educational leaders should read in the area of their interests. If leaders are posed with problems they need to read what other districts have done to solve similar problems. He stated there was no need to reinvent a solution if others have successfully solved a problem.

Timothy Chargois is the Director of Research in Planning and Development in Beaumont ISD. He suggests that leaders use data to impact decisions. He believes we might be able to change something today to impact how we teach tomorrow. He is working on an action research topic of effective and ineffective teachers. He will survey what teachers are doing today that show their ethical responsibility towards students and student achievement. He stressed when conducting action research to protect student and staff identities and to know how data will be secured and then discarded when finished. It is also important to receive districts stamp of approval on research being conducted.

Timothy Chargois suggested that leaders never stop growing since green is growing and brown is dying. We can't just teach pedagogy. We must use data in local research for our classrooms. He stated we no longer can wait three years for results and that we must have teachers who are able to conduct research on their own classes to impact more students. Results must show growth of all students for accountability purposes and we must produce result in showing student performance.

Reflection:

Between Brisco and Chargois, I find the quantitative vs. qualitative dilemma often. Brisco wanted to make sure that teachers knew who the numbers represented. Whereas, Chargois was centered completely on the data and how that data can steer instruction. Chargois did not seem as interested in the student but in the data output of the students. Brisco seemed to have a better grasp of actual classrooms and that we can't just look at the numbers but of the individuals and how their data is skewed by their environment.

I find my principal more like Chargois in the fact that they are both centered on the data and quantitative results. My principal appreciates pie charts and disaggregated reports. She make sure her teachers know that our students should all score commended on state testing and no student should ever fail the test. I understand the importance of data but I also know that it is important to understand the student who is producing those scores.

Week Two Assignment, Part 2 – Common Action Research Topics in School Settings

Read chapter two, The Passions That Drive Your Journey, from the Dana text, pp. 29 – 68, and focus on the following nine areas that the author describes as major wonderings of many school leaders:

1. Staff development
2. Curriculum development
3. Individual teacher(s)
4. Individual student(s)
5. School culture/community
6. Leadership
7. Management
8. School performance
9. Social justice or equity issues

For each of the identified areas, do the following:

- Provide at least one example of action research in each of the nine areas
- Describe why this might be an important area for action research in schools

Workspace

Complete your work on Part 2 of this assignment below. The box will expand as you type.

1. Staff development
 - a. How does the process of peer coaching help veteran teachers continue to learn and grow? What role can the principal play in facilitating this process?
 - b. Teachers want support and want to be kept abreast of changes occurring in education. As stated in the Dana book, we need to keep teachers invigorated and strive to meet their professional development needs.
2. Curriculum development
 - a. How can I build my own knowledge of exemplary writing practice? How do I use learning communities as a tool for teachers and me to utilize in the transformation of the writing curriculum at Newberry Elementary?
 - b. Curriculum is what we must teach our students and it is exceptionally important to know how to teach the content correctly. It is important that we use action research to understand the best practices in teaching and working with our students.
3. Individual teacher(s)
 - a. What types of support help my new teachers succeed? How can I best help an out of field teacher succeed?
 - b. It is the individual teacher that makes a difference in a school. It is important to ensure that teachers are given the tools to succeed especially since many teachers quit teaching in their first years.
4. Individual student(s)
 - a. What effect does the inclusion environment have on the reading achievement of eight grade Language Arts students at Lake Butler Middle School?
 - b. Action research into individual students helps teachers/administrators gain understanding into struggling learners and insight into how programs affect students of different groups.
5. School culture/community
 - a. What role does a weekly schoolwide meeting play in creating a caring school culture?
 - b. Culture of a school effects how change occurs. Action research into strategies helps programs be implemented appropriately for individual school needs.
6. Leadership
 - a. What do I learn from comparing and contrasting my own perceptions, my teachers' perceptions, my leadership team's perceptions, and my supervisor's perceptions about my own instructional leadership as a principal?
 - b. Administrators use action research to help their leadership skills and the abilities of others in their buildings. Through this action research topic the principals were able to communicate their findings and share their investigations.
7. Management
 - a. What are teachers' levels of satisfaction with the current block schedule in place at P.K.

Yonge?

- b. It is important for a principal to know how to balance management and leadership roles. Through inquiry into what teachers are content with a specific type of scheduling, will enable a smother run school.
- 8. School performance
 - a. In what ways will implementing the continuous improvement model help increase student achievement at Mellon Elementary School?
 - b. With high stakes testing and such an emphasis on student performance it is understandable that schools will want to do action research to find the best ways to increase success in these areas.
- 9. Social justice or equity issues
 - a. In what ways does a whole-group book study on Ruby Payne's A Framework for Understanding Poverty contribute to how we, as a Lake Butler Middle School administration and faculty, might create change and work toward breaking the cycle of poverty?
 - b. In an endeavor to help promote social change, an administrator might use a book study to help school educators learn about their school's social needs and how they can attempt to make changes.

Week Two Assignment, Part 3 – Selecting Action Research Topics

Review your intern plan and identify at least three topics that might appeal to you and your site supervisor(s) as possible action research projects. Indicate if you have reviewed these topics with your site supervisor(s). Students may have reviewed the potential action research projects in the initial conference reviewing the intern plan with the site supervisor(s) in EDLD 5311. If you have not discussed your top three topics with your site supervisor(s), schedule an interview and discuss the possibilities of doing your action research project on a mutually agreed upon topic. **If you cannot meet face to face with your site supervisor at this time, select 3 topics or questions you are considering for your action research project and email or communicate those to your site supervisor and ask for some feedback. Remember in Week 4 of this course, we ask that you meet with your site supervisor(s) and try to reach consensus on an action research topic(s) or question(s). So instead of having two interviews, you can do the Week Two brainstorming via email or other communication that is effective for you and your site supervisor and then complete the decision-making process on the action research project in Week Four.**

If you have selected a topic of interest not in your intern plan, be sure to add it to your revised intern plan, and visit with your site supervisor(s) to make sure this is a topic that can be researched and supported.

In completing this assignment, do the following:

- Identify at least three topics for possible action research
- Describe the conference with the site supervisor(s) regarding topics of interest for action research
- Describe the topic or problem agreed upon for the action research project

Workspace

Complete your work on Part 3 of this assignment below. The box will expand as you type.

Three topics for possible action research

1. How can the utilization of a one to one laptop environment help improve Language Arts in third and fourth grade classrooms?
2. What are teachers' levels of satisfaction with their technology integration assistance and training?
3. How do "ActivUsers" meetings at University Park Elementary help veteran teachers grow in their technology integration with students?

Describe the conference with the site supervisor(s) regarding topics of interest for action research. Describe the topic or problem agreed upon for the action research project

My site supervisor left on a cruise for the Thanksgiving holiday on Sunday and will not return until this coming Sunday when this assignment is due. In an attempt to resolve the issues I needed for my action research, I consulted with several of my colleagues. I am lucky to be a campus instructional technologist (CIT) and have many colleagues who are Technology Leaders in their own schools. I contacted by phone two of my fellow district CITs who have Masters in areas of technology leadership and are also certified Master Technology Teachers. I spoke with them concerning my action research topics. On Monday I contacted Mindy Woods and on Tuesday I contacted Leslie Kennemer. I was very pleased with my discussion with these educators because it allotted us time to discuss issues we are often too busy to discuss. Our district implements programs per school decisions not at a district level. Mindy was helpful in discussing the one-to-one initiatives' needs. Leslie was extremely helpful in ensuring the question was specific enough to actually narrow down for a short term research and not one that will require work in and information gathering in every subject area.

Since my school is looking into a one-to-one laptop initiative in the third and fourth grade classrooms, we discussed ways of utilizing that area of need as the main action research area. I decided on using "How can the utilization of a one to one laptop environment help improve Language Arts in third and fourth grade classrooms?" as my action research question.

Blog Reflection – Please remember to post at least one reflection or comment regarding lessons learned from Week Two on your blog.

Posted at <http://knightl.blogspot.com/>